

FOR PUBLIC AFFAIRS STAFF

PROGRAM Barry Farber Show

STATION WOR

DATE August 25, 1966 - 9:15 P.M.

CITY New York

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FULL TEXT

FARBER: "If you keep your radio fixed right where it is you'll hear a story of stupidity inside government intelligence that could only be told by an American.

"Sylvia Press, a lot of people, including Malcolm Muggeridge, writing in Esquire, claim that the Central Intelligence Agency suppressed your book when it was first written, eight years ago.

"You were an intelligence officer yourself. As a former intelligence officer, do you believe that?"

PRESS: "I just don't know what to say, as an intelligence officer. Of course it would be rather satisfying I suppose in a way to think that they had, that it was important enough for them to want to do it. But I don't know who the source is, and as a former intelligence officer I always put a great deal of stress on the source."

FARBER: "I want to know how the Central Intelligence Agency could suppress a book even if it wanted to."

PRESS: "Well, as I envisioned it when it was told to me, apparently they bought up copies that were on the market. I suppose anyone could do that if they had enough money."

FARBER: "Right. But then isn't the publisher in a free enterprise economy going to say 'Hot dog, that was a good customer; let's print a few thousand more.'"

PRESS: "Well, I suppose it would depend upon how enterprising the publisher was."

FARBER: "Your book is fiction. If it was written as non-

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fiction you'd probably be in jail by now."

PRESS: "Well, I don't know. I haven't given away any secrets that I should not have or that Mr. Dulles has not spoken of and written of in the public press."

FARBER: "I want to pin down right now though that you and your heroine, Helen Simon, are the same person."

PRESS: "Yes, that is true."

FARBER: "How much of The Care of Devils happened the way you wrote it? Fifty per cent? Seventy-five per cent -- just so we can judge as we talk together what kind of outrage has really been committed against you."

PRESS: "I would say 95 per cent. And the other five per cent was just for the sake of turning it into a novel -- I mean I compressed a few things perhaps, split up things into different times or something like that, but actually every word of the dialogue is 100 per cent accurate."

FARBER: "Okay. We've heard how nazism and communism destroyed the individual. Let's see how good Americans can be at that same game -- when we really try."

"This is Barry Farber. Sylvia Press, across from these microphones, used to work for the Central Intelligence Agency -- CIA. One day she was called from her desk to report to an unfamiliar part of the building and what happened to Sylvia Press in the days and weeks and months and years that followed is best told by Sylvia Press personally. First..."

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FARBER: "Sylvia Press, did you enjoy your career as an American secret intelligence officer?"

PRESS: "Well, I don't know if enjoyed is the word. I felt -- of course there was a war on at the time; otherwise I probably never would have gone to Washington. I always hated any kind of red tape or bureaucracy; I don't know why. I hadn't experienced it, but I just didn't like the thought of it. I like to feel I'm my own person, you know. And of course the war changed things, and I just -- one afternoon it came to me, it just came to me that it was the right thing to do."

FARBER: "This was the war against nazism."

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PRESS: "That's right."

FARBER: "The war everybody agreed should be fought. Right."

PRESS: "That's right."

FARBER: "After World War II was won, did you ever say, okay, I'm tired of intelligence, I'm tired of conspiring, I'm tired of handling the lives of people across the planet; I want out?"

PRESS: "Many times. But you see I was in the area of the world, in Europe, where nobody was able to come out anymore. I had a pretty good background because I'd lived there for -- in that particular area -- for about, nearly a year during the war, had been able to gather quite a lot of information, which was still good and still necessary and still useful, and many of the people who had been in the same area at the time I was had left, had families or some of them had been in the Army and got out of the Army, and so it was just understood that I would stay for a while until -- and see what was happening.

"So eventually I always wanted to come back to New York; New York is my home and I love it, and I didn't like Washington particularly. I never did. It's a lovely city, but not my kind of city, you know. So, I got a little lonely sometimes for New York and for people that I cared about. But I stayed."

FARBER: "All right. One day, a bright sunny morning in Washington at the beginning of summer -- what was the year?"

PRESS: "Nineteen fifty-four."

FARBER: "Nineteen fifty-four. Eisenhower President."

PRESS: "That's right."

FARBER: "Okay. You got a call to go to a certain section of the building where you'd never been called to go before. And you thought, hot dog, my report, which you happened to know was a good humming cracker jack good piece of work, you thought at last they're going to compliment me officially, or you had just guessed right on a certain communist defector and other people in the department of a higher rank than you had guessed wrong about this guy.

"You thought maybe they were going to congratulate you on that; neither was the case. What was?"

PRESS: "Well, actually the part of the building that I got

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to is the part that was taken by security, and this was a very, this was sort of an inner sanctum; I mean you just couldn't even get in there without a special kind of pass and they practically conducted you all over the place.

"And I got in there and there were two men, one of whom I knew fairly well, because I had worked with him on several cases. So that didn't make me feel at all peculiar. Another one was the man who was the head of it at that time; I don't know whether he still is or not. And he was being very polite. I had no idea that anything was wrong."

FARBER: "Would you care to give his name in case we can go to Washington and talk to him someday and compare him..."

PRESS: "I will give it to you but I would rather not give it to you on the air and..."

FARBER: "Okay..."

PRESS: "...and I don't think it's quite fair even though -- in spite of the way I feel about him. And they started asking questions. I was sitting at the end of a long table, the kind you see in movies, you know, but it didn't, it still didn't occur to me that there was anything odd about it, and I happen to have a pretty good memory, and most of the people there knew that and very often I was called in on various things and asked if I remembered a certain so-and-so on whom the records were not clear perhaps, or perhaps I had come across personally, and I thought at that point that probably, since the man I call Van in the book, who was the one I knew was there, I thought possibly he was going to ask me about something in connection a case I had worked on with him.

"But it didn't take very long before I suddenly realized that this whole thing was directed at me. And that, that was pretty horrifying because it was so strange. I mean ordinarily it might not be horrifying if anybody asked me a question, but if you were sitting in the security office of an agency that was supersecret and people were being polite and asking questions about where you were born and where, when that had that on 50 million different papers anyway, you'd realize that something was a little odd.

"So..."

FARBER: "Incidentally, when the wooden curtain or the corridor curtain slammed on you you couldn't even go back to your desk..."

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PRESS: "No."

FARBER: "...to pick up your cigarettes or anything..."

PRESS: "That's right. I had a package there, I had a secretary there and she wouldn't be, she would be baffled about my sudden disappearance in the middle of the morning. And the worst thing that happened though, happened oh, I guess it was within that same week, but a few days later, when they asked me to give up my badge.

"Now the badge was the thing that permitted you to enter and leave -- you couldn't even leave; not only couldn't you enter but you couldn't even leave without showing that. And I think that was when I really realized what a horrible mess I was in."

FARBER: "All right. Now let's let everybody put himself in your position right. You're working for a supersecret United States Government intelligence agency. You are innocent, of anything. You've done your job and you've done a good job. You've heard that there are evil forces in the land that want to get people like you and offer them up, sacrificially so that we can say ha ha we caught three of them this month and wait'll next month.

"Anyhow, you know that certain people are on the prowl looking for anything irregular. They want to be absolutely ruthlessly clean and make sure that everybody is secure.

"Now then. Knowing you're innocent, and here's a friend -- you call him Van in the book, and here's a Mr. Jameison (?) who's the head of security for CIA -- you know, making sure everybody inside is really on our side. I wouldn't feel -- you felt panicky in the book. I wouldn't feel the least..."

PRESS: "I didn't feel panicky in the beginning. It was not until they suddenly shoved across at me a petition it -- and it was -- I recognized it because it was going all over the place during, even before the war. It was a petition for a Communist. I don't even know who the man was; I didn't know then and I've never heard about him since. But they told me that he was a Communist who'd been I think working for the Government or possibly teaching, and this was a petition dated -- oh, somewhere in the Thirties, I think it was; I mean it had been kicking around for a long time, and lo and behold, in the list of signatures was my name -- not my signature, by my name. So, I knew that I hadn't signed it, because I don't sign petitions.

"I suppose if anyone came around that really affected me deeply enough, perhaps I could and perhaps I might; I can't say categorically that I never would. But I didn't."

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FARBER: "One thing I learned from your book, The Care of Devils, was how to put somebody absolutely ill at ease, even when they're innocent."

PRESS: "That's right."

FARBER: "You must have had a tape recorder with you that they didn't know about because you couldn't capture this kind of dialogue that accurately."

PRESS: "Well, I have a pretty good memory."

FARBER: "In other words, Jameison would say you signed this, didn't you. You said no, I never sign anything like that."

PRESS: "That's right."

FARBER: "And he said you're sure about that. You know it didn't every -- you know, insinuation cutting into your gut like a laser beam."

PRESS: "The point is that they never in all -- it lasted about seven weeks, and never in all that time did they once accuse me of anything."

FARBER: "You'd say what is it, and they'd say don't you know."

PRESS: "That's right."

FARBER: "You'd say no, what is it. Sure you don't know -- and then no matter what you say it sounds like you're wrong."

PRESS: "That's right. You're cursed if you do and cursed if you don't really. But as I say, the first point was that signature and that really troubled me, because I thought how can they possibly believe this. Of course it was a different address, but that wouldn't have mattered; and it could have been, you know. And it wasn't till after it was all over, or practically over. I think it was not quite over, that I came to New York myself, and while I was here I looked up the records for that year, I think it was 1933 or something like that, and I looked up the directory, the New York City directroy for that year, and I found this other person with the same name as mine, but our parents' names were different; our addresses -- we lived in different boroughs as a matter of fact, and I thought how could they not have looked this up. And if they did look it up, why did they have -- made a point of it as though they thought it was me."

FARBER: "Well, you realized early the answer to what you just asked. They were not investigating. They were, they were

indicting. In other words they wanted you to be guilty. They didn't want to find out if you were guilty or not."

PRESS: "All right. And what -- in spite of that, all through it I couldn't really believe -- couldn't believe that anyone would want to do that, you know. It just seemed so strange, and it was like living through Alice in Wonderland, where everything was upside down."

FARBER: "How many days did this interrogation go on?"

PRESS: "It went on for seven weeks."

FARBER: "Day after day after day."

PRESS: "Day after day. There were a few days when I think he had something to do when they suggested I could go up to the office if I wanted to, and which I did. But outside of that it was every day -- except Saturday and Sunday."

FARBER: "Now this was maddening from your point of view, because you know you were innocent. Now I did something unforgiveable. I kept trying to sympathize with the CIA guy across the desk; I'm sure you'd find that unforgiveable."

PRESS: "No, I'm not -- I understand human nature pretty well, and I think maybe anybody would have; I don't know."

FARBER: "Well, they uncovered some things; they found out that you had indeed gone to Mexico, with a man."

PRESS: "This was no secret."

FARBER: "Ahh, but..."

PRESS: "On my application, on everything I ever wrote, where it said, 'foreign travel,' I put down Mexico. I made no bones about it. But it was they who turned it around. Everything that I told them of course was simply turned -- it was like -- did you ever see a Franz Kafka picture? Well, that was the way I felt."

FARBER: "I felt like I lived too long till I saw this book."

PRESS: "You remember The Trial?"

FARBER: "Yeah."

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PRESS: "It was exactly like that."

FARBER: "Where there was no accusation, no crime; just guilt."

PRESS: "We know more than you do about it."

FARBER: "Well didn't you ever ask, 'Look, what is this all about?'"

PRESS: "Of course I did. I asked that on every other step."

FARBER: "And what did they say?"

PRESS: "We're asking the questions."

FARBER: "Was there a veneer--after all you were still an employee . . ."

PRESS: "That's right."

FARBER: "In good standing."

PRESS: "And I pointed it out to them and at one point I said to the man I called Jameison in the book; I said, 'Remember, after this is all over we're going to have to meet each other; we're going to have to work together again. Don't say things unless you're sure--but even to look at me. But suddenly it dawned on me: Is it possible that we won't be working together again? And yet I couldn't be sure; I mean I couldn't be sure because I had, I just had faith that if I told the complete truth and withheld nothing that it would be self-evident.

"And I still think it was. I think it wouldn't have made much difference what I had said, really."

FARBER: "What happened at the end of that seven weeks?"

PRESS: "At the end of the seven weeks--I learned it in the doctor's office, in their hospital actually, and I couldn't even discuss it with the doctor; they wouldn't even let me do that. So that I had to give him half information. I mean he saw the state I was in. I was practically ready to crack up, and he said, 'How long has this been going on?' He was a lovely man. 'How long's this been going on?' and I said I think five or six weeks; I'm not sure."



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"And I never saw a man look more shocked in my life. He sent me to the hospital to get checked up, and he himself said--he said, 'You know,' he said, 'this is a strange city and these are strange times,' and then he looked away and said, 'I have children growing up and I don't think I want them to grow up here.'"

FARBER: "Did he mean in Wasington or in the United States?"

PRESS: "No, Washington. He meant in Washington. I don't judge the United States by two compatriots who happen not to know their jobs."

FARBER: "In a minute, I want to go to that scene . . ."

PRESS: "Yes."

FARBER: "Where they actually strap you inside a lie detector."

"First . . ."

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FARBER: "This is WOR 710, Radio New York. I'm Barry Farber and we're retracing the rise and fall of one American who underwent what she calls psychological hell without justice and without mercy because she looked like a security risk."

"She's Sylvia Press. She worte her story inside a book that became widely unknown, The Care Of Devils. Other people claim that this book was suppressed by interested Government agencies who didn't want the story told. I can see why the CIA wouldn't want the story told. I cannot see how the CIA or anybody else could suppress a book, but I'm missing the part of the story where your testimony is most valuable, mainly what you lived through and what happened to you and why, Miss Press."

"You were subjected to interrogation through a lie detector."

PRESS: "That was part of it."

FARBER: "Yeah, part of it, after--this was after seven weeks of picking."

PRESS: "After about five weeks, I would say."

FARBER: "Incidentally this book would make a better play

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than a movie, and the movie would drag because almost everything's in that one room. Plays like it that way, you know, so they only have to build one set."

PRESS: "As a matter of fact I sold an option on it for a play. Recently."

FARBER: "Well, it ought to come about . . ."

PRESS: "Yes."

FARBER: " . . . because . . ."

PRESS: "I hope so."

FARBER: "Because this book shows how you, how you interrogate, and how you defend yourself against interrogation and how the whole process can break you down even if you're innocent. If you're guilty--you'd have probably buckled halfway through the first ten minutes, but you were innocent, and you lasted seven weeks; and you surprised them."

PRESS: "I certainly did. I don't think anybody was more surprised than those two men."

FARBER: "Was there ever a moment when you wanted to say, 'Look, I can't,'--incidentally, what time did the interrogations start?"

PRESS: "You mean what time of day?"

FARBER: "Yes."

PRESS: "They started, I think, around ten o'clock and lasted till late in the afternoon, middle or late afternoon."

FARBER: "You broke for lunch."

PRESS: "Sometimes it was just a sandwich that was brought in."

FARBER: "Well I just enjoyed seeing the techniques, and if I were a stage director you could bring all these things to life on stage--how you can just have a yellow pad in front of you and be writing down a few words every now and then, and you make the person wonder, 'What does he find important in that?'"

PRESS: "I wondered after, those are the vvey things that I wondered about. I thought, 'Well what's he find so interesting about that?'--I mean some perfectly innocuos statement. And then I'd see him writing and I thought, 'Well, why does he want to

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record that for posterity."

FARBER: "And then he'd switch hit. You pretend you're interested in your trip to Mexico with Steve Lasker, not his real name--this was incidentally the big . . ."

PRESS: "I don't, but they do."

FARBER: "Yea, yeah. And Steve Lasker was the man you were not married to but you went to Mexico with him. And the CIA knew all about Steve, you had made no secret of him. You had made a point of going and explaining everything in your life before this happened, right, and then they'd switch around to a banquet in Mexico City and weren't you sent there, weren't you assigned, and when you put a question that way all you can say is, 'no,' and that sounds pretty lame."

PRESS: "That's true. That's very true."

FARBER: "And then the part that would make anybody not just seem guilty but feel guilty was when they keep reminding you that they know more than you know, and they say, 'Did you sign this petition?' and you say, 'I don't sign petitions.' They say, 'You sure about that?' and you say, 'Yes, I'm sure.' And they say, 'Uh-huh.' And then they look at each other knowingly."

"At that moment I or any other honest man in the world would say, 'Now wait a minute, maybe I did; if I did I've forgotten.' And, my Lord, if they'd show me a petition that I actually did sign and forgot about then I look like a liar across the board on everything else."

PRESS: "Well that's exactly what happened. Not--I knew I didn't sign the petition; I mean there was no doubt in my mind. But there were some things--there were people mentioned and things mentioned which I thought I was sure about, and yet I kept thinking, 'Well, why would they mention this if there wasn't something there,' you know, and I would try to think of every contact that I had had."

"In fact I had a trunk down in the basement, and I spent night after night--after I'd leave them--going through this trunk trying to find letters or reference of any kind, because I'd, I'd--although I had a fairly good idea that I could trust my memory, I still wanted some corroboration. But if you don't know where to begin, where do you begin?"

FARBER: "There's one essential flaw that I would have to fight

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if I were directing your story on stage. Now I want to get to that, but first you tell us about the lie-detector test."

PRESS: "Well it's never a pleasant thing, I can tell you that, but the strange thing about this is, that I did take a lie detector test when I first came back from Europe after the end of the war. I had a little forgotten about it at that point until I thought about it later, and I feel if anything had been wrong with me--and all the things that they mentioned or that they had me dig up out of my mind happened long before the war, and if I had just come back from the war and my sympathies were not with the United States, let's say, just for the sake of the argument, if they'd put me on the lie detector then I thin they should have been able to find out.

"But they had. It was just a routine thing. Everyone who came back from the field, Europe or Asia, were given a lie-detector test, they did that as a routine matter. And I thought about that later, and I felt, well, they haven't even mentioned the fact that I'd been on it before and nothing happened. But when you've been harried for five or six weeks, when you're told that everything around you was slimy and miserable and that either you're tricking them or you've been tricked--your mind is in a pretty weird state, I can tell you that."

FARBER: "Well you know, your book let me down in one respect. You never really got to the--now for instance I don't know why to this day why they were interrogating you, do you?"

PRESS: "I don't."

FARBER: "Was Steve Lasker, your former boy friend now a communist that they knew about. Wasn't he with Whitner, the man who hired you to begin with, back when everybody was anti-Nazi and the Communists were friends. Was he a Communist who was using you all along?"

PRESS: "I don't believe that either of them was."

FARBER: "To this day you don't know why you were brought into that room."

PRESS: "No I do not, unless they needed a number."

FARBER: "You still think . . ."

PRESS: "There was a man named McCarthy at that time. I don't know whether you remember that."

FARBER: "I remember McCarthy, and I was waiting for you to bring him into it."

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PRESS: "oh. Well, McCarthy had been feuding with CIA because CIA wouldn't give him personnel records. You can imagine what would happen to the personnel if he ever got hold of any records at all at that time. And the papers, at least the Washington papers, were full of it. They were talking about people in various agencies trying to fulfill quotas so that they'd keep him appeased and keep him quiet, and it was getting very close to CIA and he was threatening--in fact even while this was going on, when I was in my own room at night and I was listening to radio, I would--while the thing was going on I didn't know what I was listening to most of the time anyway, I was in such a daze, but I would hear this mad voice. It would be repeating the day's hearings, you know, McCarthy hearings. I never associated myself with them for a long time."

FARBER: "You did in your book compare that McCarthy voice ..."

PRES: "Yes."

FARBER: "Senator Joe McCarthy, the late Senator Joe McCarthy."

PRESS: "Yes."

FARBER: "You compared his voice to Adolph Hitler."

PRESS: "It's true. It's a strange thing, but it's true. He had that same--you know that breathless--he'd run off a thousand words on one breath and would end up on a very high pitch. It was the same kind of technique."

FARBER: "Sylvia, come on now, don't you think it's a little much to compare Joseph McCarthy at his worst with Adolph Hitler?"

PRESS: "No, I do not. I think if McCarthy had had the opportunities that Hitler had it wouldn't seem so strange."

FARBER: "I think if McCarthy had had more of Hitler's oratorical abilities he might have come closer to having the possibility. I think that McCarthy's voice . . ."

PRESS: "I'm afraid he came close enough."

FARBER: "McCarthy spoke in a dull, droning voice. Hitler's was animal hysteria."

PRESS: "I'm speaking now of their, of their actual physical techniques. I mean they'd run the words along so they

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would almost sort of pull you along with it, you know. No, Hitler's--Hitler's voice didn't sound natural if you ever heard that. It was a very unnatural voice, just as McCarthy's seemed to be."

FARBER: "Well, I cannot wait to read the definitive work or to hear the definitive testimony that will help me make up my own mind about the life and work of the late Senator Joseph McCarthy. I'm far from having made it up yet, which is one reason I was so eager to invite you.

"I was of political age, consciousness, during the McCarthy era, and I remember--let's be grown up about it, shall we."

PRESS: "We must always be grown up."

FARBER: "No real American wants a climate of fear through government or anywhere else. Also, I assume that no real American wants communists in sensitive posts where they can do damage."

PRESS: "But he was not the man to do it, that's the point. I mean he was such an intemperate person."

FARBER: "Aha. Well. All right. Let's agree then that he was not the right person."

PRESS: "That's right."

FARBER: "To purge the United States Government politely, as politely as we would want a government to be purged. Let's take one fantasy at a time. Let's--you know a lot of people will just pooh-pooh you when you say there are communists trying to get into sensitive government spots."

PRESS: "Oh, I believe that's true. I don't pooh-pooh it by any means."

FARBER: "All right. Can we conclude that some communists have made it to sensitive spots?"

PRESS: "I don't know of any, but I'm sure there must have been."

FARBER: "Good possibility because they were trying on a lot of fronts."

PRESS: "Anything is possible. In fact--what's that phrase? Don't underestimate the power of a woman. I'd say the power of your enemy. I mean I think all nations are busy

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doing that. Not only the communists but all over the world. It's the kind of world, unfortunately that we're living in."

FARBER: "All right. Now, having agreed, at least you and I from our respective vantage points--you being on the outside and I being on the inside of something else at that time, which I'll bring up a little bit later--we agree then that there were communists trying to get into government and there were communists who might have made it. So there's nothing really essentially repugnant to a United States Senator trying to clean communists out of government."

PRESS: "No. I don't know whether it is the business of a United States Senator when they had a CIA and an FBI. I don't know that it was his job to do it."

FARBER: "Well, in a state in balance--I'm sorry, go ahead."

PRESS: "No, I mean there are, there are rules and there are ways set up for such things, and I don't think that it was ever set up for Joseph McCarthy, particularly."

FARBER: "Well, when the founding fathers founded our constitution they must have gotten up mighty early because they foresaw the possibility someday of something like a CIA--I'm sure they couldn't conceive of an intelligence agency in those days when the Constitution was written."

PRESS: "They had intelligence."

FARBER: "Aw right, but I'm sure they didn't think we'd ever go into the business of conspiracy world-wide and full time. Aw right, but they must have thought of executive agencies which the CIA is, which the FBI is, part of the Justice Department, administrative, executive agencies. They must have foreseen that some of these agencies might someday go wrong and that's why they set up the checks and balances."

PRESS: "Oh, I believe in the checks and balances system. But I don't believe in its misuse; that's the only thing."

FARBER: "I see. So you think that McCarthys worst crime is that he misused . . ."

PRESS: "He misused his power. I think that's one of his crimes. I charge him with a few more."

FARBER: "All right. Now, the moderate who complains about McCarthy is, as you do, won't get too much of an argument from me. I too wish that the arch senatorial anti communist had been a more pleasing type than the late Senator McCarthy,

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because he wouldn't have been so vulnerable to anti-anti-communist attacks."

PRESS: "Well the thing that I usually use--it's a pretty good yardstick, I think--is motive. And McCarthy was falling all over himself. He was accusing one agency of having 50 communists; the next day it was 20, then it was three, and then, when challenged to produce those three, he couldn't produce them."

FARBER: "All right. I would too. Now Senator McCarthy is gone, he's been laid to rest. Let's talk about the so-called climate of fear which so many people talked so poetically and piously about. Was there a climate of fear from where you lived and worked in those days."

PRESS: "There was a climate of terror."

FARBER: "Really?"

PRESS: "Absolutely. I saw it immediately because the moment I disappeared from my office the most natural thing in the world would be for people who knew me to call me up, find out where I was or what I was doing. Nobody called. They knew that something--they sniffed it, you know, it was a sort of a . . ."

FARBER: "You later found out, point blank, that somebody you liked and trusted at your job had been advising your other mutual friends to, 'Stay away from Ellen, she's hot.'"

PRESS: "That's right."

FARBER: "Of course your real name is Sylvia, but in the book you're Ellen."

PRESS: "That's right. And of course the only reason that I found it hard to believe anybody is that we don't always know how we would react ourselves. Who knows, I might have done the same thing. I might have hated it, but I might have just chosen the course of self preservation."

"But the fact that you had to be faced with such a choice, I think is a pretty dreadful thing."

FARBER: "My own concept of the McCarthy era--and admittedly this is not hardened. I am looking for testimony. I don't think history has spoken the final word yet. We have to wait and see what happens. Or at least I have to read a lot more books like yours from different side of the story. But



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it always struck me as being like I am walking in the woods, and I throw a rock aimlessly into a place with an awful lot of pigeons, and those pigeons cause a tornado trying to flee. Now, I didn't mean to terrorize those 6,000 pigeons in that field. I just threw one rock. Maybe I was aiming at something, and these pigeons just took off in panic. Question, did McCarthy cause all the terror or was he after specific, legitimate objectives, namely rooting Communists out of sensitive spots, and did the Washington sheep--and certainly you could corroborate the character of a lot of people working in sensitive agencies--did these people just take off in terror on their own?"

PRESS: "No, the fact that most of us remained there and went on and did our daily work as though nothing were really wrong. But at the first smell or fear of something wrong, it was the same technique. Nobody knew what was right and what was wrong, what was good and what was bad. They couldn't be sure. That was the climate of fear."

FARBER: "I was in Washington, employed officially in those days, too, in another sensitive agency. And I have never been able to accept the fact that McCarthy caused a wave of terror. I think he scared an awful lot of people, most of them pretty timid types who might need a good scaring to shake them up. I have more respect some time for the terror monger than the terrorized. And I think if Washington had been--if America in general were a little tougher to terrorize, then we could contain people who want to take over."

PRESS: "Well, I don't want to see a country full of weaklings myself, God knows. I'd like to see us strong. I'd like to see us strong both as a nation and as individuals. However, when strong people even can be reduced by terror--and terror is something tangible almost. We saw that in Germany. We know what it did to people, destroying people in Germany."

"So we can't just dismiss it and say, 'I will not be terrorized, I am different,' you know?"

FARBER: "Right now I want to issue an appeal. I think we ought to study McCarthyism. I am not talking now about the Edward R. Murrow's who stood up publicly, or about attorney Welch in the Army-McCarthy hearings, who stood up publicly to Senator McCarthy."

"I want to hear from people who know about people or who are themselves people who stood up on the level where you were, in the middle of a totem pole in some anonymous government"

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bureau and who saw the terror creeping around in whispers, and this one's a security risk and this one disappeared from her desk for three days, maybe she is being interrogated, and what-ever happened to Sylvia Press? I want to know someone who stood up and said, 'This is nonsense and that Senator McCarthy is a jerk and I don't care who hears what I am saying, that's my opinion.' I want to know what happened to people like this in that riptide of terror that you talk about."

PRESS: "Well, on that level, if they were not on a level above him, I don't think they stood up very long."

FARBER: "Why do you think the nation took it if it was that bad? I am talking about the era of Senator McCarthy. We're not a cowardly nation, we're not a cowardly nation."

PRESS: "Oh, there are many people who followed McCarthy, don't forget. We aren't all as intelligent as we might be or as kindly disposed toward our neighbors as we might be. And that I think is a very important feature."

FARBER: "I'd almost like to demand a post card ballot, if I could. If you work in Washington or in a sensitive government agency or any government agency or any agency where you were directly under the threat of Senator Joseph McCarthy in those days."

PRESS: "We were indirectly under it, too."

FARBER: "Indirectly to college professors, union and so forth. All right, if you were vulnerable to Senator McCarthy, please write me. Was there a reign of terror or was there not, and if so, how terrifying was this particular terror? You and I really share what I think is a common enemy: pigheadedness, the pigheaded guy you call Jameson and this pigheaded coward you call Herman and Van, and a pighead to end all pigheads, the boss of the bosses at that time, whom you personally appealed to."

"All right, fine, I'm against cheeseheadedness, somebody who, because you took a train trip to Mexico with a man you weren't married to, is going to say, 'Whoo, you are a security risk.'"

PRESS: "People who live by the book rather than by their hearts."

FARBER: "And who don't know, don't care. You must have felt

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like crying just thinking of the real hero types that you worked with in World War II, parachuting into Albania, and so on.

"All right, so let's agree the enemy, our common enemy, is pigheadedness and fear."

PRESS: "I'm for that. I mean I'm agin' it, but I'm with you."

FARBER: "The big flaw is this, Sylvia. The book says, 'The Care Of Devils,' on the front, and the, 'The nightmare novel of what they did to a woman behind the closed doors of the CIA,' and here is a woman bent over, obviously crying, four artfully shadowy men standing over her. And the big flaw, Sylvia, the big flaw is at it is most horrifying, at its most horrifying, this is a distress. But when I hear of terror and interrogation, I think of, 'To the wall,' and you disappear and you never see your wife and family again. You wound up in a Dominican Republic sewage pipe in 85 pieces or . . ."

PRESS: "Oh, those are the way-out things. But there are ways of terrifying people that have nothing to do with anything physically."

FARBER: "But do you understand what I mean? The worst that happened is that you got fired by the Director of this, and you were free to go to New York and live in the sun."

PRESS: "It's not the worst that happened, it was not the worst that happened. First of all, it nearly drove me to insanity. The reason I wrote the book, really, was as a therapeutic exercise, I mean to get it out of my system so that I could start living again. And--but it's pretty terrifying."

"When you are entrusted with something by a country like ours and two stupid men--really that's what they were--who don't know their jobs come along and show signs of wrecking your life--it's not enough to wreck your life, but on the grounds that you were disloyal to your own country, don't you consider that pretty terrifying?"

FARBER: "I consider it pretty terrifying and distressing and thoroughly un-American and to be fought by every honest American. But a story of American terror where I would expect . . ."

PRESS: "I did not design the cover. All I asked my new publisher was that in designing it they not show someone being attacked on the cover, or something like that."

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FARBER: "That's the point. Where I would expect a bamboo reed to start being fitted under the fingernails, you were taken off to lunch, and having gone to one little restaurant after another in Washington . . ."

PRESS: "Oh, no, indeed, it wasn't that way at all. I practically--I didn't see a soul for seven weeks except these two men, who were constantly putting ideas in my mind that were enough to terrify anybody. I began to fear that--I began to think, 'Who, among the people that I know, is the one? Have I been so stupid all my life?' I thought I understood people. Is it possible that everybody around me has been partaking of something, has been using me, has been identified with all the wrong things that I myself am against?"

"And it's a mental--as you say, you know, the Kafka technique, but Kafka didn't write light comedy, you know, and most of his people were not--there was no physical brutality in his stories. But there is such a thing as mental brutality, and that's what it was."

FARBER: "In a minute, I want to know if you think that America, knowing what you now know about the real American under psychological fire, bureaucratically in the government, I want to know if you think America could ever let itself be swallowed by a dictatorship of the right or the left?"

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(A commercial for Rambler automobiles had mentioned this being "National Mind Changing Month.")

FARBER: "Well, it's almost national mind changing lifetime in the book that you're writing."

PRESS: "Yes, I think that's very apt."

FARBER: "Sylvia Press, do you think America could ever be engulfed by a dictatorship?"

PRESS: "Well, I have my own feeling about the American people. It's awfully hard to talk about the American people because, as you know, we are made up of so many things. But I think there is an American--I am sure there is an American--it's a sort of coast that may need a little alteration on one man or another woman, but it fits us all, you know. And in

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my own lifetime I have seen things happen with people. Great numbers of people got hysterical over one thing or another, or fearful. But fundamentally, I don't think we are that kind of people. I think that we have our feet pretty well planted on the ground. We may go off in a tangent, we may make awful fools of ourselves for a time, but I think there is a fundamental common sense that permeates this country. I think that's a pretty dependable thing."

FARBER: "Apparently even our tangents aren't as tragic as they are elsewhere on the planet."

PRESS: "Well, thank God, so far they haven't been."

FARBER: "Sylvia, I became your friend by reading your story, to be put inside the Care Of Devils, and I just want to thank God that your personal reign of terror happened to happen in the United States instead of in Germany, Nazi German, or today's Russia or Poland or Czechoslovakia or Hungary, Rumania, Bulgaria, Albania or Communist China."

PRESS: "I don't even make the comparison. There is no comparison. I agree with you."

FARBER: "Thank you for coming."

PRESS: "I enjoyed it. It was pleasant to talk with you."

FARBER: "Sylvia Press. She wrote her story in fiction form, but it happened, 95 percent of it, she says, inside her book, The Care Of Devils. The book has been 'in' for a long time, written, but somewhere underground, you couldn't buy it. Now it's coming out in paperback, published by Sylvia Press. The Care Of Devils. It's the story of what happened to Sylvia Press when she was an employee of an American intelligence agency, trying to do her best at a time in America where the best was still suspect."

"This is Barry Farber and I thank you for your attention."